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Man charged in Niles Township Speedway shooting

STAFF REPORT

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — A Niles man has been arrested and charged in connection with a Monday shooting outside of a Niles Township gas station, according to the Berrien County Sheriff's Office.

Alonzo Davis was arraigned in 5th District Berrien County Court on Tuesday on the following felony charges: Assault with intent to murder, unarmed robbery, felon in possession of a firearm and two counts of felony firearm.

At approximately 12:15 p.m. Monday, deputies responded to the Niles Township Speedway, 1402 S. 11th St., after reports of a shooting. A 44-year-old Niles man was hospitalized for a gunshot wound and has since been released. Davis, 39, was taken to the hospital to be treated for an unspecified non-life-threatening injury before being arrested and booked.

Davis

The shooting remains under investigation.

This is a developing story. Leaderpub.com will be updated as more information becomes available.

Edwardsburg welcomes new trustee

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader Publications Contributor

EDWARDSBURG — The Edwardsburg Village Council welcomed and swore in recently elected trustees during Monday's meeting, including one new member of the council.

Trustees Dennis Peak and Nancy Stoner were sworn in for another term after a successful election for each. New Trustee, John Sharp, was also sworn in after running a successful write-in campaign to fill the seat left vacant by the departure of Jay Penny, who did not rerun for election. Sharp previously served on the village Planning Commission and will leave a vacant seat there which will need to be filled. Penny had served as the Water Trustee, a role that will now be taken on by Trustee Kellen Van Hulle until the current term ends. The council also voted to reappoint Peak as the Village President.

Jean Schultz, of Cass County Historical Society, spoke again during the public comment section of the meeting regarding the future of the current Edwardsburg branch of the Cassopolis District Library, which will be vacant once the facility moves to a new building, currently under construction. She listed several possible uses for the building, including a community or senior center, and noted the long history of the building in the village. The Council thanked her for her suggestions and discussed whether parking would be a problem for those uses.

Department of Public Works head Richard Low reported the iron filtration plant as successfully online and already showing positive results, including clean water witnessed during hydrant flushes and minimal wear on filters close to the water source.

He also reported Geographic Information System mapping in the village as nearly complete. The GIS process creates digital maps of village utilities underground, helping with maintenance and addressing problems as they occur.

He reported progress on various seasonal operations by village staff. He also noted that the underground preparations for a stop light installation at Elkhart Road and US 12 was complete, though the final installations may be delayed due to supply chain issues. At the direction of the council, he will research costs for updating multiple buildings to create more efficient storage options for village equipment.

While reviewing financial documents, Trustee Van Hulle requested village staff

See TRUSTEE, Page A8

SERVICE CELEBRATED

Niles veterans presented with Quilts of Valor

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — Four local veterans were honored and recognized for their sacrifice and service with a special ceremony at Brentwood last week.

Tom Buti, Leo Goss, Earl Hansen and Richard Moore were presented with handmade quilts Thursday, Nov. 14 from the Quilts of Valor, a national nonprofit nonpolitical volunteer organization aiming to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing. Each quilt is handmade with an original design.

"A Quilt of Honor is one of the very highest awards an American citizen can bestow on a service member," said Erica Broecker from the Quilts of Valor's South Bend chapter. "It's a lifetime award. On behalf of the quilt of Valor and in recognition of your service and sacrifice to our nation, it is our privilege to honor and bestow upon you a Quilt of Valor."

Buti was in the Navy from 1960 to 1964. He was a parachute rigger. His quilt was made by Joyce

See SERVICE, Page A8

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS CONTRIBUTOR
TOP: Tom Buti, Leo Goss and Earl Hansen were presented with handmade quilts from the Quilts of Valor. Not pictured: Richard Moore.

6 54708 09550 1

Small Business Saturday returns to downtown Niles Nov. 30

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — A popular holiday event will be returning to downtown Niles next Saturday.

Niles Main Street is gearing up to host the annual Small Business Saturday event from 10 a.m. to dusk Saturday, Nov. 30 in downtown Niles.

Hosted annually the Saturday after Thanksgiving, SBS is a day where small businesses nationwide are celebrated and promoted by their communities.

Local businesses will be working to make their business a destination on that day by offering specials, entertainment and refreshments.

The event will kick off

See SMALL, Page A8

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

OBITUARIES

James Berry
Naomi Pierce
Sharon Evans
Bonnie Verkinder
Tim Smith
George Bergman

A6

FRANKLY
TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

"Is there a local stargazer club? I'd like to join the club."

A2

Resilient Niles beats Portland 37-34 in regional football thriller

B1

FRANKLY

TIPS, QUIPS, AND BLIPS

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip, quip or blip? Call Frankly at (269) 687-7702 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com

"Matt Gaetz? Really? That's the best we can do for the Attorney General position?"

"It wasn't long ago that a House investigation into sex-trafficking might be something keeping a person from an Attorney General nomination."

"The vote is over. Quit the whining and let Trump do his thing."

"Niles football is so awesome! We are so proud of the team's success."

"This "no left turn" stuff is total garbage. We waited so long for the 12 and 51 intersection to be finished and now we have to drive in the Grand Prix just to make a turn. The state really screwed this up. Talk about overthinking..... This is why government has no clue."

"I'm surprised a toll booth wasn't added to the new US-12 and M-51 intersection. And, you still need to turn in front of speeding traffic to go back in the opposite direction. How is it safer when there have already been a bunch of accidents?"

"I am so happy the elections are over, for now... It's time just to move forward and hope things work out for the better."

"If you haven't visited downtown Dowagiac lately, you need to. It had been a while for me and I think it's just so nice. Great shops, places to eat and a holiday atmosphere make it a great place to get in the spirit."

"Is there a local stargazer club? I'd like to join the club."

"Be kind to those less fortunate. People don't just stand at a corner with a sign asking for money if life has treated them well. I'm sure they have had to deal with some very bad things and could use an act of kindness. A prayer, a dollar or sandwich goes a long away for someone who has nothing."

WEATHER

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	60% Chance Rain Showers	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	60% Chance Frozen Mix
45° 35°	48° 44°	51° 35°	36° 30°	36° 29°	34° 27°

ANNUAL RAKE A DIFFERENCE EVENT SERVES 330+ SENIORS

COMMUNITY REPORT

BERRIEN COUNTY — On Thursday, Nov. 14, teams from all over Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren county took their rakes, gloves, and rain gear to yards throughout the area to help seniors in need of yard maintenance.

The 14th annual Rake a Difference Event served 336 seniors around the three county community, with 134 teams involved in the event, encompassing a total of 1,319 volunteers that lent their time and talents to those in need.

"Thursday's weather was definitely not the prettiest, but our teams stepped up and did what they could to help seniors across the area with a smile!" stated United Way of Southwest Michigan's Debbie Ramirez. "Some teams were so excited to do the work, they even called in asking for more houses and more supplies before the day was over. That's the kind of caring community we live in, and it's so heartwarming to witness. I know our seniors appreciated it as well."

Ramirez and her United Way Rake a Difference organizing team spent most of last week calling and organizing volunteer work plans, assembling supplies for pickup by teams, and taking last minute change requests. Work on the Rake a Difference event starts early in each year, but the "zero hour" is certainly the same week of the event when everything comes together to make sure seniors are

See RAKE, Page A8

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS
Participants from the 2024 Rake a Difference event cleaned gutters for area seniors as part of teams spread across Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties.

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SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Annual Sharing is Caring event set for Dec. 7

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — For the second straight year, those who wish to contribute to multiple local charities in need of funds and goods will have the opportunity to do so in one location.

Sharing is Caring: A Community Day of Donation will take place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7 at the St Mary's School gym, 219 South State St. in Niles.

Those wishing to donate will have the option to "curb drop" items in the parking lot, where volunteers will be stationed to unload. They are also welcome to go inside, where multiple local charitable organizations will have tables for accepting items and financial donations. Blank holiday cards will be set up for signing, eventually to be given to residents at River Ridge Nursing Home and The Chalet of Niles.

Thanks to the 2023 event, every resident of the Chalet received a signed holiday card and employees there were able to set up a clothing "shop" for residents to choose from donated items.

Event organizer Kelly Connell is hoping to duplicate the success of the event's debut last year.

She recalled the pleasantly busy day in 2023, when many charitable organizations present at the event were so busy they had to call for help at their tables and additional vehicles to move the many donations. Connell described the charities as overwhelmed by the response in the most positive way.

"Last year went really really well," she said. "I was so happy. I was so proud of our community."

She recalled a story of a woman walking from table to table with her checkbook, offering financial donations to each organization. All charities present will be accepting financial donations and providing receipts, in addition to accepting items based on their various needs. A list of specific needs, as well as other event information, can be found on the "Sharing is Caring: A Community Day of Donation" page found by searching Facebook.

Additionally, St. Mary's Cub Scout Troop 579 will be inside selling hamburgers, hot dogs, cookies, and drinks, as well as collecting returnable cans.

Connell said she was overwhelmed with gratitude at the response from the community.

The idea of making it easier for people to donate came in 2022 when, after scrolling social media, she realized how busy people could get around the holidays. She was struck with the idea to put all of the local organizations in one place and give people a fast and easy way to accomplish their holiday giving in one step.

"It just dawned on me," she said. "It hit me like a lightning bolt."

She emphasized that giving does not have to be an expensive venture, with many of the items needed available at local discount and dollar stores.

She also noted a need for volunteers at the event to assist with accepting donations and other tasks that day. Those interested in helping can reach out via the Sharing is Caring: A Community Day of Donation.

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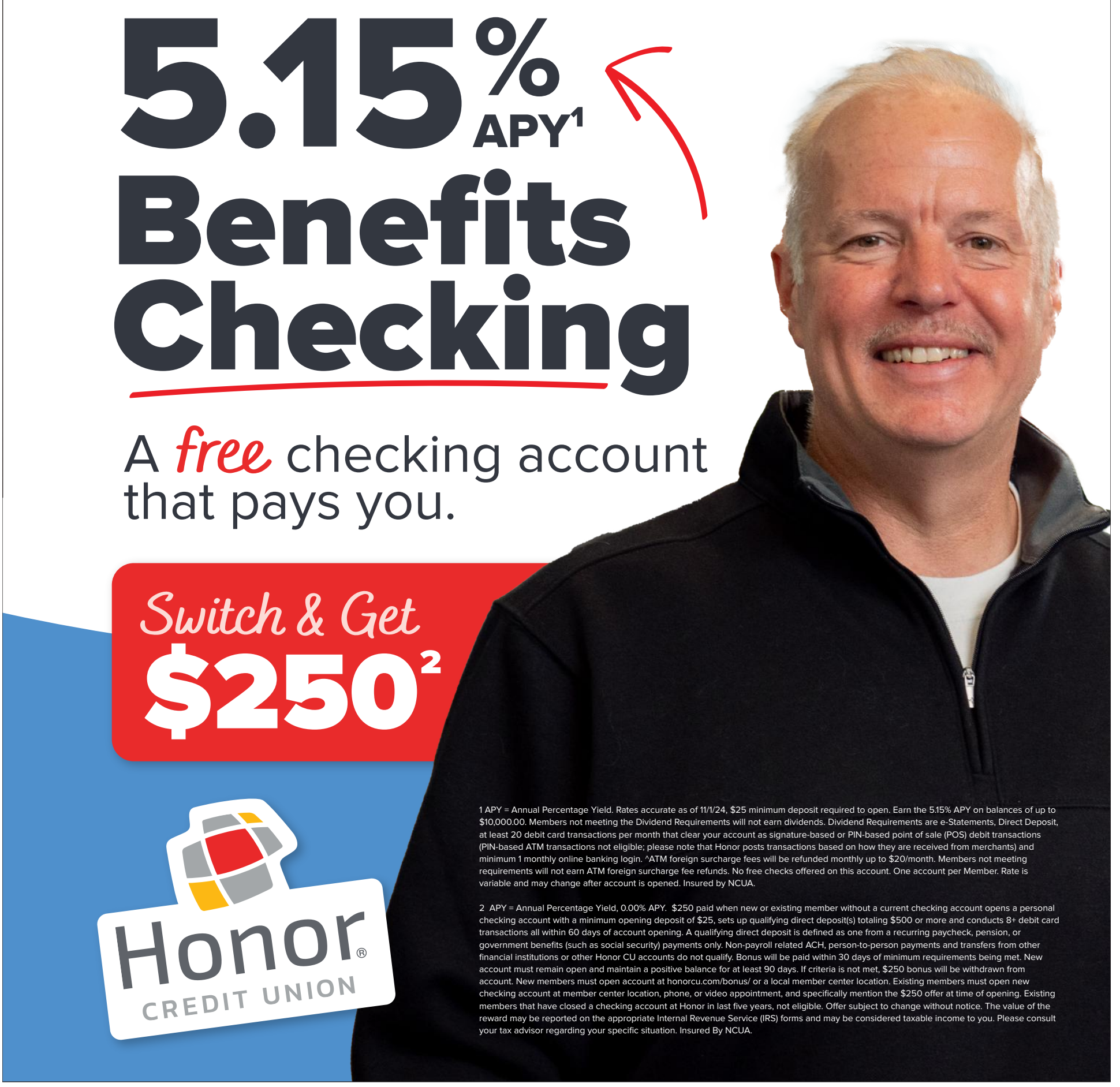
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Opinion

The people have spoken, again!

By RICH CAINS
Publisher, Leader Publications

There is elation and fear in most presidential elections. The 2024 United States presidential election was no different and is now a sliver of American history. It certainly was a most important election, but like all the others, its significance will likely diminish when the next vote for the Oval Office takes place in four years, or at least that's what the national media will undoubtedly tell us to believe. We can only speculate for the next several years as to what this new administration will bring to the American people and the world for that matter, after all, the national media needs something to write and talk about. Brace yourself for debate after debate on whether new policies are helping or hurting us as the new administrative gears and levers move more swiftly.

Cains

As red and blue dry the eyes of joy or sadness, maybe we can spend the holidays in a more purplish motif? For "years" during this latest election cycle we have been cheering with vigor or scratching our head in disgust for the leaders and challengers at all levels of government. Our politics have taken us to the highs and lows of passion with serenity and anxiety. No one can say any longer that America is apathetic when it comes to voting in a presidential election or at least claim a downward trend in balloting. Those who wanted to vote, did. Those who needed to express their opinion, did. Those politicians who made promises will either keep them or they will not, and it is up to the voter to decide who stays and who goes. This is how we do it in the United States of America.

An old saying states "you are who you walk with." As it relates to voting, for this and every election, you own your vote. Feeling good about your decision and knowing it was the right choice is not always easy, especially if your only news source comes from Facebook and your barber. If you voted, you felt you had a personal stake in the outcome. I believe every voter has an obligation to hold our politicians accountable for fulfilling their campaign promises and for those promises you never agreed with, use your next vote to let them know how you really feel or better yet, write them today.

As Thanksgiving approaches, I hope your travels are safe, your loved ones are near and politics can be placed under the table as we gather in giving thanks for the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies and for the abundance we have over and around us.

Be safe, be happy and find optimism

NEWS

LMC hosting auditions for spring musical

COMMUNITY REPORT

BENTON HARBOR — The Lake Michigan College Visual and Performing Arts Department will hold open auditions for the Spring production of "School of Rock," based on the Paramount movie by Mike White, book by Julian Fellowes, lyrics by Glenn Slater, and new music by Andrew Lloyd Webber.

This production will be directed by Susan Matheny and produced by LMC Instructor of Theatre Shalico Sain.

Students and community members are invited to participate in auditions set for 12-3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7; 5:30-7:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8; and 6-8 p.m. Monday, Dec. 9 in the LMC Mendel Center Sizer Rehearsal Studio, 2755 E. Napier Avenue, Benton Harbor.

While the Visual & Performing Arts Department prioritizes casting full-time enrolled students, community members are strongly encouraged to audition.

Audition guidelines are as follows:

- Pre-registration is encouraged at tinyurl.com/LMCSOR25. Drop-ins are permitted.
- Bring a picture and resume (if you have one).
- Come prepared to move/dance; dress in comfortable clothing.
- Bring a cutting of a Broadway or pop-rock song from the 1970s-2000s. An accompanist will be provided. You may also sing to a background track.
- Prepare a monologue, poem, or prose piece that is under one minute in length. Selections from the musical are available in the School of Rock Audition Packet or you can bring your own.

Characters/roles available include Dewey Finn, Rosalie Mullins, Ned Schneebly, Patty, Summer Hathaway, Zack Mooneyham, Freddie Hamilton, Katie, Lawrence, Tomika Spencer-Williams, Marcy, Shonelle, Billy Sandford, Sophie, Mason Ward, James, Madison, Ms. Sheinkopf, Mr. Noble, Mr. Green, Gabe Brown, Ms. Bingham, Mr. Mooneyham, Mrs. Hathaway, Mr. Spencer-Williams, Mrs. Sandford, Mr. Ward, Mr. Hamilton, Mrs. Turner, Mrs. Travis, Jeff Sanderson (MC), Stanley (Record Store), Girl 1, Girl 2, Security Guard 1, Security Guard 2, Police Officer. Including the "No Vacancy" band kids – Doug (Drums), Tina (Bass), Bobbi (Guitar), Snake (Guitar), and Thea (Vocals) – all who must be 14 years old or younger and able to play the instrument on stage.

Performances are Friday and Saturday, March 28-29, and Friday through Sunday, April 4-6. Rehearsals begin on Monday, Jan. 13. They will regularly run 7-10 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays, with occasional Friday-Sunday rehearsals a possibility.

Students and community volunteers interested in building the set or assisting with costumes, lights, props, or run crew should contact Sain at ssain@lakemichigancollege.edu.

For more information about the LMC Visual & Performing Arts department and performances, visit lakemichigancollege.edu/arts, email mmccaffrey@lakemichigancollege.edu, or call 269-927-8876.

Suspect arrested, charged for 4 Berrien County robberies

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES — Detectives from the Berrien County Sheriff's Office announced Friday that a man has been arrested in connection with a string of central county robberies starting in June.

Turner

Edward Deontae Turner, 38, of Berrien Springs, was arraigned Friday at the Niles courthouse and is charged with four counts of armed robbery, four counts of possession of a firearm by a prohibited person and four counts of use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. His bond was set at $250,000 cash or surety.

Turner's next court dates are Wednesday, Nov. 27 for a pre-exam conference and Tuesday, Dec. 3 for a preliminary hearing. He faces a maximum penalty of life or any term of years on the armed robbery counts, five years in prison for the prohibited person firearm counts and consecutive two years for the felony firearm counts.

The incidents occurred between June 25 and Nov. 14 at stores in Benton, Oronoko and Royalton Townships.

The June 25 armed robbery was at the Dollar General in Oronoko Township, the Sept. 6 incident at the Dollar General in Royalton, the Oct. 10 incident at the Dollar General in Benton Township and the Nov. 14

See SUSPECT, Page A7

$1.5 million in cocaine seized in Berrien County drug bust

STAFF REPORT

BERRIEN COUNTY — A 22-year-old Canadian man was arrested Monday after authorities discovered and seized approximately $1.5 million in cocaine from his vehicle while conducting a traffic stop on I-94, according to the Berrien County Sheriff's Office.

On Monday, deputies received information of narcotics traveling through Berrien County on I-94. The Berrien County deputies located the suspected vehicle, a Freightliner tractor trailer, and initiated a traffic stop on I-94 for a traffic violation near mile marker 34 eastbound.

During a search of the vehicle and trailer, 50 kilograms of cocaine were located,weighing approximately 123 pounds. The approximate street value of the substance is $1.5 million. The suspect, Sukhraj Singh, a 22-year-old male and Canadian resident, was lodged at Berrien County Jail.

Berrien County Deputies were assisted by Berrien County Centralized dispatch and Michigan State Police Southwest Enforcement Team.

Niles Daily Star

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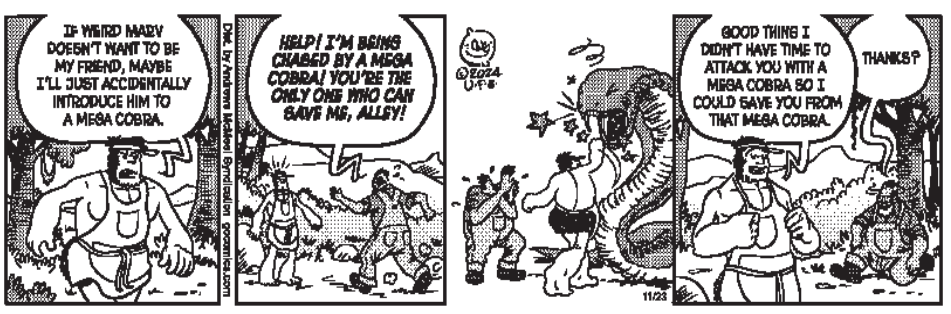
COMICS & PUZZLES

ADAM

HOLIDAY TALKS, CONT'D:
OKAY. I SEE YOUR POINT.
I COULDN'T WAIT FOR TURKEY, SO...
HOW ABOUT ONE PRESENT A WEEK EARLY, AND ONE CANDY BAR A WEEK BEFORE HALLOWEEN?
AND NOT SOME FUN-SIZE ALMOND JOY, EITHER.
NO, NO! KING SIZE! KID-APPROVED!

ALLEY OOP


IF WEIRD MARY DOESN'T WANT TO BE MY FRIEND, MAYBE I'LL JUST ACCIDENTALLY INTRODUCE HIM TO A MEGA COBRA.
HELP! I'M BEING CHASED BY A MEGA COBRA! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE ME, ALLEY!
GOOD THING I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO ATTACK YOU WITH A MEGA COBRA SO I COULD SAVE YOU FROM THAT MEGA COBRA.
THANKS?

ARLO & JANIS

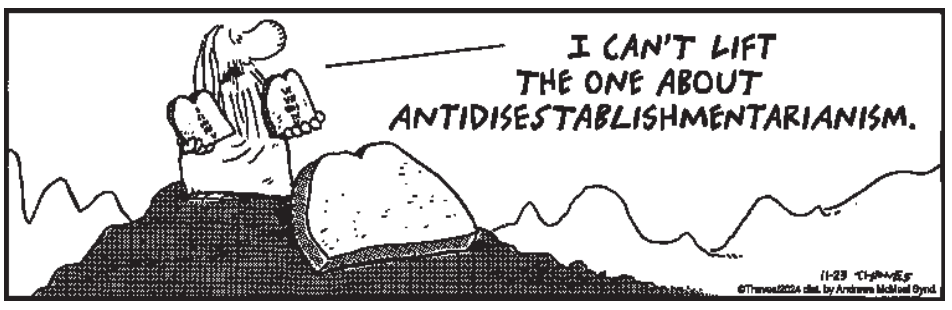
BIG NATE

WHAT DID YOU SAY?
I... I SAID I LOVE YOU, DAPHNE.
I HOPE THAT DOESN'T SOUND... Y'KNOW... TOO SAPPY, BUT... WELL... I JUST THINK YOU'RE THE GREATEST.
NO, YOU'RE THE GREATEST!
NO, YOU'RE THE GREATEST!
NO, YOU ARE!
YOU ARE!
YOU ARE!
YOU ARE!
WE'RE DONE HERE.

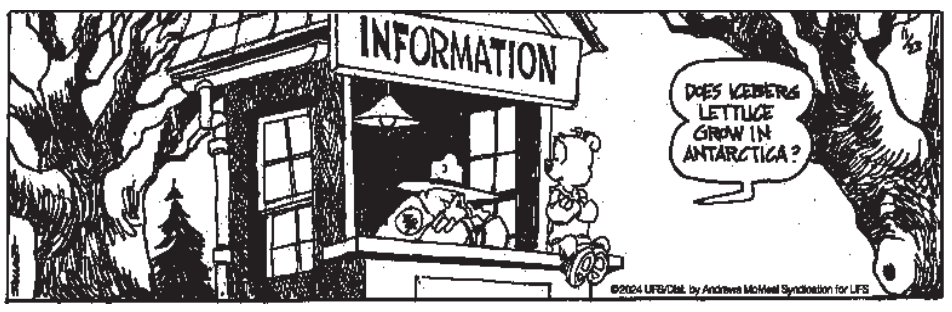
BORN LOSER

I NEED HELP WITH MY HOMEWORK, WHAT'S AN EGOTIST?
AN EGOTIST IS A——
HOLD IT, GLADYS, I'LL HANDLE THIS!
AN EGOTIST IS A SHOW-OFF WHO THINKS HE KNOWS MORE THAN EVERYONE ELSE!

FRANK & ERNEST



GRIZZWELLS



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SODOKU PUZZLE

HOW TO PLAY: Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

DIFFICULTY RATING: 5/5

ANSWER ON PAGE 6

	3			2	4			
4		1		9				
	8	2		1	3			
		8	3	5			6	
6								2
	9			6	8	3		
			7	4		2	8	
				8		1		9
			9	3			7	

MODERATELY CONFUSED

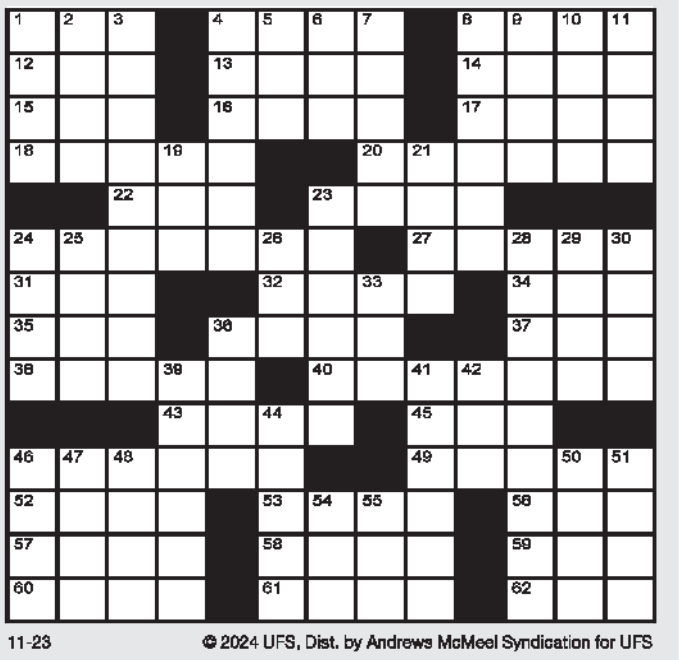
REALITY CHECK

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1 — and cheese
4 Singer — McEntire
8 On — and needles
12 "That's gross!"
13 Bedouin
14 Pointed arch
15 Watery expanse
16 "Die With a Smile" singer Lady —
17 Timbre
18 "To — — human ..."
20 Spooked
22 Small colonist
23 Attempt
24 Ring-tailed animal
27 Circular
31 Toward the tail
32 Exigency
34 Born (Fr.)
35 Rage
36 Feeble
37 Actor Billy — Williams
38 Compass point
40 Modern door opener
43 Breezy
45 — de cologne
46 Polynesian island
49 Proprietor
52 Israeli airline
53 Metric unit
56 Couple
57 Detective — Wolfe
58 Round dance
59 Snaky fish
60 Stag
61 Adolescent
62 Parched

DOWN
1 Ponder
2 Golden- — —
3 Distinctive nature
4 From — — riches
5 Baseball stat.
6 Satchel
7 Embarrass
8 Spud
9 Prince in opera
10 Island goose
11 Pip
19 Abbr. in business
21 Quantity of wood
23 Under-handed
24 Drizzle
25 Big hairdo
26 "Loneliest" number
28 Resolute
29 — -do-well
30 Act
33 — out a living
36 Jot
39 "Tinker — Soldier Spy"
41 Royal attendant
42 Crow's cry
44 Correct
46 Look after
47 Toward the sheltered side
48 Fabled racer
50 Pitcher
51 — -poly
54 Caviar
55 "Diamonds — Forever"

ANSWER ON PAGE 6



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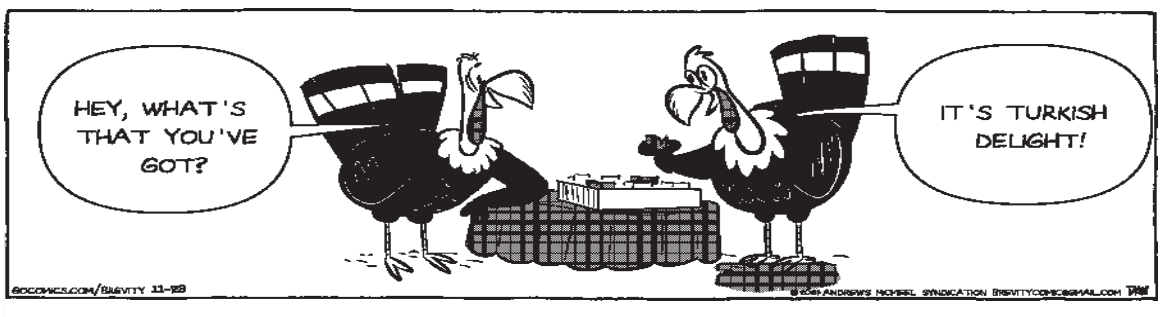
BREVITY



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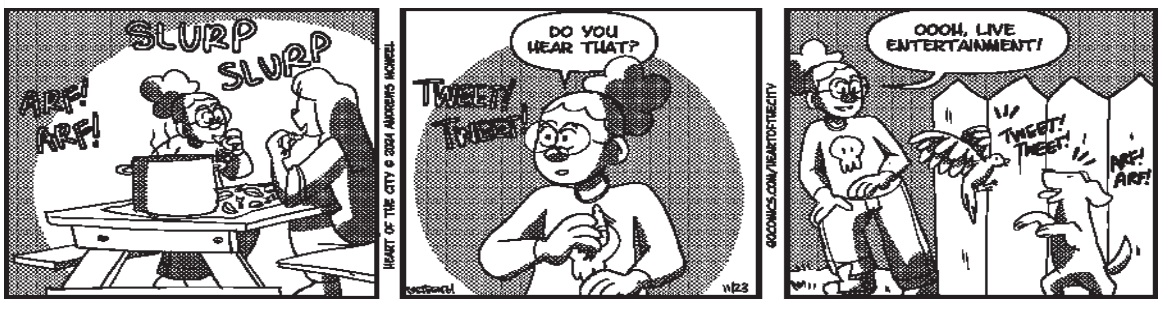

DEATH NOTICES

James Berry, 73 of Niles, passed away Friday, November 10, 2024. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com

Naomi Pierce, 86, of Buchanan, passed away Monday, November 18, 2024. Arrangements are pending and have been entrusted to Brown Funeral Home & Cremation Services, of Niles. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com.

OBITUARIES

Sharon Evans

December 6, 1949 - November 17, 2024

Sharon Kay Evans, 74, of Vandalia, died peacefully Sunday, November 17, 2024, in the comfort of her family's presence.

Her life began December 6, 1949, in Niles, Michigan, the second of three children born to Donnie and Donna Knepple.

Sharon had a knack for stirring up mischief and an infectious laugh. She was known as the "life of the party" with her penchant for whacky antics. She was always ready with a joke and a smile. She had a place in her heart for every friend and family member. Sharon enjoyed crafting, including card making and calligraphy, and making Christmas items. She shared her talent by teaching some classes to her Florida friends.

She was formerly a massage therapist which earned her the nickname of Aunt 'Sage.

Sharon was born and raised on Donnell Lake in Vandalia, along with a slew of cousins. She enjoyed water sports her entire life. She was even credited for saving the life of a friend from drowning. She always wanted to return to Donnell Lake and was fortunate enough to spend her last two years living there.

Sharon will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by daughter, Kanisha Evans; grandson, Nathan LaMothe; sister, Judy (Paul) Rutherford; brother, Scott Knepple; and a host of cousins, nieces, and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Family and friends will gather from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. Saturday, November 23, 2024, in the Penn Township Hall, 60717 South Main Street, Vandalia, for a time of sharing memories and telling stories.

Her cremains will be scattered in Donnell Lake and various locations she cherished.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Sharon be made to Centrica Hospice, 7100 Stadium Drive, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49009 or to the Cass County Council on Aging, Post Office Box 5, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

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December 4: The Texas Tenors - Deep in the Heart of Christmas - Blue Gate Performing Arts Center in Shipshewana, IN. Enjoy a delicious lunch and holiday show by the most successful music group in the history of America's Got Talent.
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Sloppy Joe Sandwich Boxed Lunch
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Bonnie Verkinder

December 16, 1924 - November 15, 2024

Bonnie Jean Verkinder, age 99, of Palos Park, Il, formerly of Sister Lakes, MI, and the South Chicago suburbs, passed away on Friday, November 15, 2024, at Peace Village, Palos Park, Il.

Bonnie began her life on December 16,1924, in Chicago. She was the daughter of Walter and Nora (Walsh) Firth. She graduated from Fenger High School in Chicago and was united in marriage to George Verkinder on Jan. 9, 1945, in Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Chicago.

Bonnie's surviving devoted family includes her three daughters - Jacquelyn and her husband, Joe Farrell of Cheshire, CT, Judith Molinaro of Chicago, and Deborah and her husband - Jim Albano of Valparaiso, IN; nine grandchildren - Lisa Olmstead, Sean Farrell, Bernard Heinen Jr., Anthony Molinaro, Michael Farrell, George Heinen, David Molinaro, Justin Albano and Tatti Albano; twelve great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death were her husband - George in 2007, after 62 years of a loving marriage; daughter - Pamela Heinen; and son-in-law - Robert Molinaro.

Bonnie's greatest passion in life was her love for her husband and daughters, whom she was devoted to. She was known for her competitive spirit when playing cards or any other game. Bonnie had a wonderful sense of humor and was always able to laugh at herself. She handled the last difficult years of her life in the same manner she had lived her entire life with grace, dignity and good spirits. Her Irish wit never left her. She was a true friend to those who befriended her and will be forever missed and loved. Her zest for life will live on in her daughters and grandchildren.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 3:00 PM on Friday, November 22, 2024, at Sacred Heart of Mary Catholic Church, 51841 Leach Rd, Dowagiac, MI. Friends may visit with Bonnie's family on Friday from 2:00 PM until the time of Mass. Interment will follow in Sacred Heart Cemetery. Arrangements were entrusted to Clark Chapel and Cremation Services - Starks Family Funeral Homes, 405 Center St, Dowagiac. Please visit Bonnie's personalized webpage to share a memory or leave condolences to her family at www.clarkch.com.

Tim Smith

December 4, 1953 - November 12, 2024

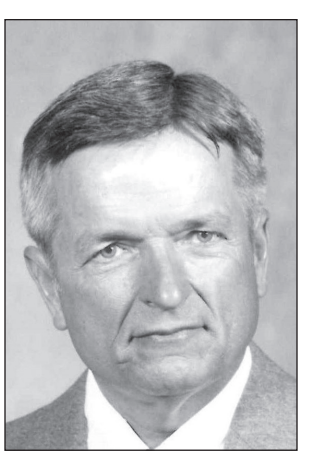
Timothy Harold Smith, aged 70, passed away on November 12, 2024. Born on December 4, 1953, Tim grew up and spent his life in the Cassopolis, Michigan community. He was known for his love of family, deep appreciation of nature, and humorous storytelling. Tim and Jill were married just after high school and recently celebrated their 52nd anniversary. Jill was the true love of his life, along with his two daughters Melanie and Katie and his grandson Valor. In recent years visiting with Valor (age 7) was his favorite way to spend time. His friends were like family to him and some of the most meaningful friends in his life passed before him while many survive him.

Tim was a fourth-generation farmer in Penn Township. He spent his early years working on the family farm before purchasing his own land and starting Big Cottonwood Farms with his wife Jill. Later in life he transitioned to a 15-year tenure as a production supervisor at Michiana Box and Crate.

His passion for the outdoors was evident through his hobbies. His love of birds was infectious, inspiring many members of his extended family to fall in love with birds as well. His daughter Melanie is a scientist specializing in bird conservation and digital mapping and his daughter Katie is a software engineer. He often took the family camping up north--he was always the first one up in the morning, preparing an early breakfast and singing songs until everyone emerged from the tent. He took the girls fishing often when they were kids, and in his later years boating around local lakes with Jill and their friends was his favorite hobby. He also loved natural history, meteorology, and maps. He was the family trip planner and weather man, with a sign above his desk that read "Tim Smith's Map & Weather Headquarters." He knew a lot about local history and Native American artifacts. He cared deeply about current events, social justice, and protecting the environment. Aside from these hobbies, Tim was known for his humor. He was both serious and light-hearted. Many will remember him best for frequent emails and phone calls just to share a funny story, talk about a new bird at the feeder, or share something interesting that he had learned.

He is survived by his wife, Jill Smith; daughters Melanie (Sarah Venator) Smith and Katie Krupa; grandson Valor Krupa; and siblings, Mike (Beverly) Smith and Sally (Jamie) Stone and Debbie (widow of brother Dan) Smith; Jill's siblings; and their many nieces and nephews. Tim was preceded in death by his parents, Robin and Carol Smith, and his brother, Dan Smith. Tim's memory will be cherished by those who knew him. Following his wishes, the family will privately put his ashes in Dowagiac Creek at Russ Forest next spring when the migratory birds return.

For anyone wanting to support the family during this time, they ask that in lieu of flowers please make a donation to the Audubon Society in his honor.



George Bergman

George Arvid "Doc" Bergman, DVM, 93, long time veterinarian of Cassopolis, died peacefully at home November 13, 2024 at the age of 93, after a long period of living with Alzheimer's disease.

He was born January 5, 1931 in Cassopolis, Michigan the first of two sons born to Dr. Roy and Lois (Townsend) Bergman. George attended school in Cassopolis before studying veterinary medicine at Michigan State University and graduating with honors in 1954. Later that same year, he joined his father in veterinary practice in Cassopolis.

Doc married Nell Jane Street December 20, 1952 in Cassopolis. Both were born in Cassopolis, attended school together there and were lifelong residents, active in the community. After almost fifty-two years of marriage, she preceded him in death in 2004.

Doctor George owned, operated, and remained active in the Bergman Animal Clinic for over sixty years, from 1954 to 2014. In fact, his involvement with the practice had begun a lot earlier. From the time he was a young boy, he had been riding with this father on farm calls and assisting with the care of the animals brought to the clinic. There was a never a question that George would become a veterinarian.

Doc routinely clocked 80,000 miles in a single year visiting large and small farms across rural southwest Michigan and northern Indiana. He enjoyed the company of the trusted large animal veterinary assistants who rode with him and the long list of interns, students, family and friends, cub scouts, boy scouts, nieces, nephews, his children, and grandchildren he invited to come along to learn what it was like to treat the animals on local farms.

In 2022, on the 100th anniversary of the Bergman Animal Clinic, the following was part of a tribute that appeared in the Marcellus News: "George has left an indelible mark on rural Cass County. Many a farmer will recall his quick arrival to farm calls, him slipping on his muck boots, and greeting humans and animals alike with a big smile, a genuine laugh when things went well, and warmth and concern when things didn't. - Thank you, Dr. Bergman"

Doc Bergman will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his daughter, Jane Bergman of Cassopolis; his son, Roy Bergman of Stevens Point, Wisconsin; three grandchildren, Gregory (Erin Chimney) Sampson, Ellen Jane Bergman, Mary Elizabeth Bergman; and two great grandchildren, Lillian Jane Sampson and Margaret June Sampson.

In addition to his wife, he was preceded in death by his parents and his brother, Roy Thomas Bergman.

Family and friends will gather Saturday, November 23, 2024 from 1:00 p.m. until time of service at 2:00 p.m. in Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, 202 North Broadway Street, Cassopolis for a time of sharing memories and telling stories.

Doc will be laid to rest beside his beloved wife in a private family ceremony in Young's Prairie Cemetery in Penn Township.

The family prefers contributions in his memory be made to Cass County Animal Control, 323 M-62, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031, or to Corewell Health Hospice and Palliative Care, 4025 Health Park Lane, Saint Joseph, Michigan 49085.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

CROSSWORD ANSWER
From Page 5

M	A	C		R	E	B	A		P	I	N	S
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SUDOKU ANSWER
From Page 5

9	3	5	6	2	4	7	1	8
4	6	1	8	9	7	5	2	3
7	8	2	5	1	3	6	9	4
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6	5	3	1	7	9	8	4	2
2	9	7	4	6	8	3	5	1
3	1	9	7	4	5	2	8	6
5	7	4	2	8	6	1	3	9
8	2	6	9	3	1	4	7	5

Forester Highlights Career Paths

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Jeff Steinkraus.

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Jeff Steinkraus of Marcellus owns Steinkraus Forest Management and has been serving southwest Michigan and northern Indiana for almost 30 years, since 1995.

As he told an audience Nov. 19 in the William P.D. O'Leary Building, he earned his bachelor's degree in forestry in 1990 from Michigan Technological University and is a registered forester, a certified commercial pesticide applicator for Michigan and Indiana and a certified tree farm inspector.

He has owned Steinkraus Forest Management since 2007. From 1993-2007, he was staff forester for Wakeland Forestry Consultants of Culver, Ind.

Steinkraus served as president of the Association of Consulting Foresters of America Michigan Chapter from 2002 to 2005. He has belonged to the Michigan Forest Association since 1995 and to the Society of American Foresters since 1993.

Dr. Thomas O. Green, Michigan State University outreach coordinator for MSU's agricultural business certificate at SMC, hosted the speaker, who was also heard by John Tinker's construction trades green technology students.

Steinkraus grew up on an 80-acre Gladwin dairy farm northeast of Mount Pleasant, but wanted to separate himself from milking 26 cows while continuing to work outdoors and to hunt and fish.

"(Such small farms) don't exist much anymore in this day and age," Steinkraus said, "so it's probably good I chose a different path. But at that time I was just ready to do something else. I was pretty good in math and science in high school, even if I wasn't sure what a forester did. I figured the UP would be a fun place to explore nature."

"My last year of college I got married," he said.

Wendy, a Beaverton girl and his wife of 35 years, played trumpet in the Marching Chips during a

See PATHS, Page A8

SUSPECT

Continued from page A4

incident at the BP gas station in Oronoko Township.

The suspect in the incidents were described as a black male, tall with a slim build and armed with a black semi-automatic pistol. The person was observed with a gray backpack in the Sept. 6 and Oct. 10 incidents. Police also received a description of a vehicle in the Oct. 10 incident which led them to find the vehicle and place a GPS tracker on it.

Turner was arrested after the Nov. 14 incident on M-139 near Red Bud Trail. He did not deny committing the armed robberies but stated that he wanted a lawyer present. A search of his residence found a gun, disposable gloves and a bank bag stolen from the BP gas station. A search of his vehicle uncovered the gray backpack.

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PATHS

Continued from page A7

year at Central Michigan University.

She eventually enrolled in the SMC nursing program and today is a nurse practitioner.

Their youngest, Amy, graduated from the SMC nursing program in 2022.

All four children earned SMC associate degrees.

"My oldest went to Michigan State for her bachelor's in nursing degree. She's up in Canada now. My son went to Michigan Tech and farms. My third daughter got her degree in biology and chemistry. I have one other forester working for me who lives in Kalamazoo," Steinkraus said. "We cover all of southwest Michigan, from Hillsdale to Lake Michigan and Grand Rapids."

Services foresters offer include timber land management and plans, timber inventories and appraisals, timber marking and marketing, timber stand improvement, forest tree planting and plantation management and appearing as an expert witness.

Management plans begin with a clear statement of the landowner's objectives, both general and specific, for the short and long run. Maps depict physical attributes of the property, including vegetative cover types (stands), streams, roads, wetlands, soils and other important characteristics.

A forest management plan should be reviewed and updated every five years or as conditions change. It's recommended to work with a consulting forester such as Steinkraus to write the plan.

Forests once covered 95 percent of Michigan, compared to about half today.

Forest cover varies by region. Twenty-one percent of the southern Lower Peninsula is occupied by patchy woods and wetland corridors, whereas 65 percent of the northern Lower Peninsula and 84 percent of the Upper Peninsula are covered by large forested tracts.

Foresters are in demand, with a projected 5-percent job growth by 2033. This is due to the ongoing need for forest management, timber production and conservation.

Foresters work in a variety of settings, including state and federal forestry agencies, municipalities, consulting firms, universities, non-profits and private industry, such as logging and lumber companies, sawmills and research and testing facilities.

There are currently an estimated 11,300 U.S. foresters.

"Michigan Tech, MSU and Purdue in Indiana offer forestry," he said. "I also thought about becoming an arborist," or tree surgeon.

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RAKE

Continued from page A2

served and volunteers are connected.

"The need grows every year. In fact, we still have 28 seniors on a waitlist that needed to be served this year," Ramirez says. "We hope in 2025 we have even more great volunteers to meet the need so these seniors can be served."

A video encapsulating the fun of the day was recently released on the United Way of Southwest Michigan social media channels profiling teams from across the area enjoying their work. A contest for the best video and photo from the teams also has voting open through the rest of Monday, November 18 at uwsm.org/rad-contest.

"On to next year!" Ramirez stated. "Time to begin the planning!"

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

SERVICE

Continued from page A1

Hostettler and quilted by Kathy Boxell. Goss was in the Air Force from 1953 to 1961. He was a Crew Chief on a B47. His quilt was made by Kathy Boxell. Hansen was in the Air Force from 1941 to 1942. His quilt was made by Muncie Mini Group, quilted by Sarah. Moore was in the Army. He was trained to dissemble and reassemble B29 Bombers. His quilt was made by the Muncie Mini Group, quilted by Sarah.

"We're always trying to do different things and have different ways to honor them so it's amazing that they picked us to do this with," said Jen Hack, Director of Sales and Marketing at Brentwood. "Our life enrichment team is really good about doing different things to honor the veterans who live here."

TRUSTEE

Continued from page A1

research changing bond payments to HighPoint to a more secure electronic funds transfer versus mailing a check, due to the high amount of the payments. Trustee Garwood also inquired about diversifying village certificates of deposit among multiple banks. Village CDs are currently all held at one financial institution, though other village finances are spread to others. The council also approved an invoice for $466.50 to Ferguson Waterworks for an emergency repair in the Michiana Shores neighborhood.

The council voted unanimously to approve new rates for employee health insurance in 2025 through Blue Cross Blue Shield. The rates reflect a 14.8% increase in cost, totalling in a $5600 total increase per year.

The council also approved a completely new Planning Commission Ordinance, bringing Edwardsburg into compliance with changes made by the Michigan Legislature in 2008. The changes mirrored the Ontwa Township ordinance, which had already been vetted legally and matches state guidelines. Included changes are updates to the code of ethics to combat conflicts of interest, the removal of the Village President as a member of the commission, and changing the voting block from an even number to an odd number. With the approval, the Planning Commission will begin work on new by-laws.

The annual Cookie Walk was announced for December 5th, followed by the Christmas tree lighting at the Edwardsburg Area Historical Museum at 6:30pm.

The Village hall will be closed Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29 for Thanksgiving. The next Cemetery Board Meeting is on at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 10 and the next Village Council meeting will take place at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 16, both at the Village Hall.

SMALL

Continued from page A1

with a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the grand reopening of the Niles Outdoor Dining Experience, which has been under construction since August. Features will include a fireplace, overhead lighting and a stage area for performances.

SBS highlights include horse-drawn carriage rides, live music until 7 p.m., entertainment, Santa's grand arrival and the lighting of downtown's holiday decorations. Downtown shops will be open and offering holiday discounts, drawings, and festive treats, allowing customers to find the perfect gifts for loved ones while supporting local businesses. "Passports" will be available for customers frequenting downtown businesses. Customers can receive stamps on their business passports for completing certain tasks for the chance to be entered into a drawing to win prizes.

The Niles Fire and Police Departments as well as the Howard Township Fire Department will be downtown collecting funds for the Salvation Army as well as providing fire safety information to children. Tents with local musicians will be set up downtown and the Chapin Mansion will be hosting its Holiday Open House. The event will end at dusk when Santa arrives to light the decorations and take photos.

Event organizer Justin Flagel hopes the community comes out to shop for gifts and support local businesses.

"Small Business Saturday is a great way to get people downtown and support local businesses," Flagel said. "It gives them the chance to show off what they're doing and gives them an opportunity to do something special. Small businesses can only exist with the support of their community and this is a great way to do it."

Niles Daily Star
Sports

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Dowagiac athletes receive fall sports honors

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — The fall sports season is winding down and several Dowagiac athletes have been recognized for their efforts.

Below is a list of Dowagiac athletes named to All-Lakeland Conference teams, all-state teams and team awards.

Cross Country

Boys

•Owen Saylor – 1st Team All-Conference, state qualifier

•Trenton Gordon – Honorable mention, Team MVP

Girls

•Sadie Bonczynski – 1st Team All-Conference, Team MVP

•Alexandra Jijon – Honorable mention

Volleyball

•Zabrina Shivers – 1st Team All-Conference, Team MVP

•Tessa Deering – 1st Team All-Conference

•Marlie Carpenter – 1st Team All-Conference

•Riley Todd – Honorable mention

•Ava Nate – Honorable mention

•Hanah McCuddy – Honorable mention

•Brianna Campbell – Honorable mention

•Emerson Kruger – Academic All-State

•Brenna Mott – Academic All-State

Boys soccer

•Mason Bressler – 1st Team All-Conference, All District

•Andres Hernandez – 1st Team All-Conference, All-District, 1st Team All-Region, All-State Honorable Mention, Team MVP

•Tyler Hannapel – 2nd Team All-Conference, All District

•Andres Brito – 2nd Team All-Conference

•Elijah Stout – 2nd Team All-Conference

•Jaylin Medrano – All-District

Girls golf

•Rebecca Guernsey – 1st Team All-Conference, conference medalist 1st Team All-State, Academic All-State, Team MVP

•Carlee Spagnoli _ 1st Team All-Conference, Academic All-State

•Jaden Kusch – 1st Team All-Conference

•Olivia Stockwell – Honorable Mention

•Madison Winchester – Honorable Mention

Football

•Devean Whitaker – 1st Team All-Conference, Varsity MVP

•Jamal Williams – 1st Team

See HONORS, Page B3

CROSS COUNTRY

Martin's King signs with SMC

COMMUNITY REPORT

DOWAGIAC — Emily King of Martin High School has signed her NJCAA Letter of Intent to run cross country for Coach Zac Sartori and the Roadrunners. King will also compete in track and field for SMC.

Coach Sartori said, ""Emily is a very talented young lady and her excitement for the sport is really inspiring. I can't wait to have her on campus. I just know she's going to be such a positive force for us and I can't wait to see what she can do."

Coach Kristin Evers added, "Emily has been a student-athlete, captain and leader for the Martin Clipper Cross Country team. More importantly, she is a dedicated student and supportive teammate. I am proud of her commitment to her high school career and know that she will be a successful runner for Southwestern Michigan College."

King is the second member of SMC's 2025 Women's Cross Country recruiting class, joining Lillian Wolf of Hartford.

Student-athletes interested in competing on any of SMC's nine intercollegiate teams as a Roadrunner should complete the Recruiting Form at https://smcroadrunners.com/landing/index

VOLLEYBALL

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Edwardsburg, Niles volleyball players earn All-Wolverine honors

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaaderpub.com

EDWARDSBURG — Three Edwardsburg and three Niles volleyball players were recently named to Wolverine Conference All–Conference teams.

Edwardsburg's Sarah Pippin was named First Team All-Wolverine and Ella Laskowski was named Second Team All-Wolverine while Mya Eberlein was named Honorable Mention. Additionally, Pippin and Laskowski were named Division 2 All-Region by the Michigan Interscholastic Volleyball Coaches Association.

For Niles, Bree Lake was named First Team All-Wolverine and Nyla Hover was named Second Team All-Wolverine while Kendall Gerdes was named Honorable Mention.

Lake and Gerdes were also named Division 2 All-Region by the Michigan Interscholastic Volleyball Coaches Association.

FOOTBALL

RESILIENT NILES BEATS PORTLAND 37-34 IN REGIONAL

FOOTBALL THRILLER

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaaderpub.com

NILES — With its season on the line, the Niles football team delivered in big-time moments Friday night in a game those in attendance will not soon forget.

Talen Bennett's scrambling, 14-yard touchdown pass to Sam Rucker with 1:10 remaining and Brenden Olsen's interception in the closing seconds lifted Niles to a 37-34 victory over Portland in a Division 4 regional final. The win avenged last season's loss to the Raiders in the regional final and secured the team's first football regional title in school history.

"I give our kids credit, man," said Niles Head Coach Scot Shaw. "We didn't quit and neither did they. This was a heck-uva football game, man. I don't think they get much better than this."

Bennett completed 5 of 12 passes for 74 yards, one touchdown and one interception and Peyton Gordon had six carries for 71 yards and a touchdown while Paul Hess had 14 carries for 70 yards, 10 tackles on defense and a fumble recovery.

Niles outgained Portland 369-307, including a 295-173 edge in rushing yards. Portland's Ethan Cassel was 10 of 17 passing for 134 yards and three touchdown passes and added a rushing touchdown. Chris Battley had three catches for 64 yards and two touchdowns, Evan Gross had four catches for 53 yards and Nolan Zbytowski had two catches for 12 yards and a touchdown.

In his final game at Vikings Stadium, Sam Rucker had 16 carries for 143 yards and three touchdown runs, two catches for 34 yards and a touchdown catch and 11 tackles on defense.

"He's pretty good, isn't he," Shaw said. "He's a good football player. He's a senior, he's played in a lot of football games for us and I told him before the game that it's up to him to lead us somewhere where we've never been and he took it to heart."

Trailing 34-29 and facing a 4th-and-12 on the Portland 30-yard line with 2:50 remaining, Sam Rucker hauled in a 20-yard pass from Bennett to keep the Vikings' season alive.

"I knew that they thought we were gonna pass the ball, so I did my best to try to make myself as open as possible. I was ready for the contact when it came so when I caught it, I was able to shake it off and get the first down."

A few plays later, Rucker scored the game-winning touchdown using the same play.

"I knew it was going to have contact right when I got it," Rucker said. "As soon as I got through that contact, it felt great."

Olsen had two catches for 32 yards, four tackles and the game-clinching interception. For Olsen, his interception in the closing seconds – his eighth interception of the season – served as a form of redemption after getting beat on a Portland touchdown pass from Ethan Cassel to Chris Battley to tie the game at 21-21 at halftime.

"I knew they were going to throw a fade there, they weren't going to run anything up the middle with 20 seconds left and no timeouts," Olsen said. "I tried to put myself in the best position possible to make it happen."

With the regional championship trophy in hand, the Vikings will face Grand Rapids South Christian (8-4) next week on a neutral field with a date, time and location yet to be determined. The winner of that game will earn a trip to Ford Field for the Division 4 State Championship game.

A game for the ages

The Vikings led 7-0 after one quarter of play thanks to a 30-yard touchdown from Sam Rucker. After getting a fourth down stop, the Vikings marched down the field and capped a scoring drive with a 21-yard Sam Rucker touchdown to go up 14-0 in the second quarter. The Raiders responded with a 15-play, 72 yard scoring drive capped by a 10-yard touchdown pass from Cassel to Zbytowski to trim the deficit to 14-7.

Following a 35-yard Payton Gordon touchdown run, the Raiders' Brady Rowe took the ensuing kickoff 97 yards to trim the deficit to 21-14. A Bennett pass was intercepted by Portland, who found the end zone on a 35-yard touchdown pass from Cassel to Chris Battley with 57 seconds left in the half to make it a 21-21 game at halftime.

Portland received the ball to begin the second half and once again found success through

See NILES, Page B3

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

BASKETBALL

No. 14 Ferris State women beat Northwood 87-63

COMMUNITY REPORT

BIG RAPIDS — The nation's 14th-ranked Ferris State University women's basketball squad got off to a blazing start and coasted past visiting Northwood in a 87-63 regional win on Wednesday (Nov. 20) evening inside Jim Wink Arena.

Ferris State improved to 5-1 overall this year as the Bulldogs took control early and never looked back in posting a second consecutive home win.

The Bulldogs built a 30-13 edge after the opening period and led by 17 at halftime en route to the win. The lead grew to as many as 27 points with four minutes left in the triumph.

Overall, the Bulldogs made 15 threes – including an 8-for-8 start – in the game and shot 50 percent (15-30) from the three-point line.

"That was one of the hottest starts I've ever seen a team have," said Ferris State Coach and Dowagiac graduate Kurt Westendorp. "I told them in the postgame huddle if we can start every game making our first eight threes, I like our chances. That ball just really moved so well to open the game; I feel like all eight of those looks were just right on the money with the passes – all of them were assisted. Itt was really an excellent job to come out of the gate hot."

FSU also forced 24 turnovers and outscored Northwood 31-15 in points off turnovers along with 24-7 in fast break production.

Senior guard Kadyn Blanchard had 20 first-half points for the Bulldogs and added seven rebounds and six assists for the Bulldogs.

Meanwhile, senior guard Kenzie Bowers tallied a game-high 21 points and pulled down eight boards with four assists in the win, which came against her younger sister, Lexie, who played for Northwood. The two played in front of a large crowd of supporters from their hometown of Kent City.

Along with Blanchard and Bowers, the Bulldogs also got 13 points from junior Mia Riley along with 12 points from junior Elle Irwin, who made four-of-six threes while adding four assists and a game-high four steals. Riley added four assists and three steals.

The Bulldogs shot 47.1 percent overall from the floor, including 64.7 percent in the opening quarter. FSU also finished by making all six of its free throw attempts in the game.

Ferris State limited NU to 40 percent shooting and the Timberwolves shot only 32 percent (8-25) from the three-point arc along with seven-of-10 (70 percent) at the free throw line. Lea Holmes led NU with 14 points and Lexie Bowers had nine in the setback.

The Bulldogs finished the night with 12 steals and nine blocked shots.

Ferris State will host seventh-ranked Ashland in a battle of top 15 teams nationally on Saturday (Nov. 23) at Wink Arena. Tipoff is set for 1 p.m. (ET) and the game will be a rematch of last year's NCAA Division II Midwest Regional Semifinal won by the Bulldogs.

FOOTBALL

Bobcat footballers earn all-conference honors

STAFF REPORT

NILES TOWNSHIP — Members of the Brandywine football team have been recognized for their excellence both on the field and in the classroom.

Five Bobcats – Tommy Killelea (OL), Drew McKee (OL), Kaeden Warfield(Skill), Carter Sobecki (LB), Maurice Hoskin (DB) – earned First Team All-Lakeland Conference honors and five more – Carter Hayes (OL), Ronson Jordan (DL), Carter Sobecki (Skill), Jason Wilson (LB), Mason Simmons (TE) – earned Honorable Mentions.

Additionally, Warfield, Sobecki and Killelea were named to All-Region teams and Sobecki and Jayden Manigold were named to Academic All-Region and All-State teams. The Brandywine football team was Honorable Mention Academic All-State.

FOOTBALL

Notre Dame has been among the nation's top three in GSR among FBS institutions for 18 consecutive years and has led the nation in 16 of those 18 instances.

Notre Dame Leads The Country In Latest NCAA GSR Ratings

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — The University of Notre Dame leads all NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision institutions with a 99 Graduation Success Rate (GSR), as released by the NCAA on Wednesday, November 20. The 99 rating edges Boston College, Northwestern and Stanford, all with 98 ratings, among football competing schools in the country. The data utilized in the rating is for the 2014-15 to 2017-18 freshman cohorts for all NCAA Division I institutions

Notre Dame has been among the nation's top three in GSR among FBS institutions for 18 consecutive years and has led the nation in 16 of those 18 instances. Eighteen of Notre Dame's 22 men's and women's sports rated by the NCAA earned perfect 100 scores

Programs that earned a 100 rating from 2014-17 include baseball, men's basketball, men's cross country/track and field, men's fencing, men's golf, men's lacrosse, men's soccer, men's swimming and diving, men's tennis, softball, volleyball, women's basketball, women's rowing, women's golf, women's lacrosse, women's soccer, women's swimming and diving and women's tennis.

Among all Division I institutions across the country, Notre Dame led the way as well with its 99 overall rating, joining Columbia, Harvard, Santa Clara and Yale who all compiled a 99 GSR rating.

FOOTBALL

Notre Dame Announces Meetings with Texas in 2028, 2029

COMMUNITY REPORT

SOUTH BEND, Ind. — The University of Notre Dame football program has announced a two-game series in 2028 and 2029 with the University of Texas.

Notre Dame will host Texas on Sept. 9, 2028, and the Irish will travel to Austin for a game on Sept. 22, 2029. Game times and broadcast networks will be announced at a later date.

Notre Dame holds a 9-3 record all-time with Texas, owning a 3-1 lead at home and 4-1 record on the road, with a 2-1 record at neutral sites. The most recent meeting between the two teams came in 2016, a narrow 47-50 Notre Dame loss in double overtime at Texas.

In the 12 previous matchups between the two programs, Notre Dame has been ranked in nine of the games, and both teams have been ranked in seven of the meetings. The first game between the teams came in 1913 at Texas, a 30-7 Notre Dame win.

Notre Dame is 49-26 all-time against SEC opponents. Notre Dame's most recent SEC matchup came in the 2024 season opener, a 23-13 road victory at No. 20 Texas A&M.

TENNIS

Six WMU Athletics Programs Post Perfect Graduation Success Rates for 2014-17

COMMUNITY REPORT

KALAMAZOO — Western Michigan's men's tennis, golf, gymnastics, women's soccer, softball and women's tennis programs all posted perfect Graduation Success Rates (GSR) for the 2014-17 cohort.

The GSR is a metric that was developed by NCAA presidents that is mandated for student-athletes only. Graduations must occur within six years of initial entry to be included in the GSR. Student-athletes who leave school while academically eligible to compete are removed from the calculation.

"I am very proud of the dedication exhibited every day by our student-athletes toward the ultimate goal of graduation," said Lorne Robertson, senior associate athletic director for administration, academics and compliance. "The work that the student-athletes, athletic academic and compliance staff, coaches and all our University partners put forth to help the success and graduation of our Broncos is remarkable."

The men's soccer, women's basketball and track and field/cross country programs all had GSR's above 90 percent. Every one of WMU's athletic programs outperformed the Federal Graduation Rate. The overall GSR average for Western Michigan Athletics was 89, rising two percent from last season and up six percent since 2019-20.

HONORS

Continued from page B1

All-Conference
•Cal Chapman – 1st Team All-Conference
•Kaleb Smith – 1st Team All-Conference
•LaMone Moore Jr. – 1st Team All-Conference
•Austin Farley – 1st Team All-Conference
•Cooper Szymczak – 1st Team All-Conference
•Devon Rock – 1st Team All-Conference
•Cameron White – 1st Team All-Conference
•Tim Masterman – 1st Team All-Conference punter, Honorable Mention Offense
•Isaiah Fitchett – Honorable Mentio
•Payton Brown – Honorable Mention
•Austin Thunell – Honorable Mention
•Quentin Hill – Honorable Mention
•Skyler Vincek – Honorable Mention

NILES

Continued from page B!

the air, with Cassel connecting with Battley on a 22-yard touchdown pass to take a 28-21 lead. The Vikings put together a drive into the Portland end zone before turning it over on downs when Rucker's pass to Gordon fell incomplete.

Just when it felt like Portland was on the verge of putting the game away, the Vikings forced a fumble that was recovered by Hess on the Portland 41-yard line.

The Vikings made the most of Hess' fumble recovery as Sam Rucker found the end zone moments later on an 11-yard run. Niles went for two and Bennett completed the pass to Olsen to give Niles a 29-28 advantage with 1:22 left in the third.

In the fourth quarter, Portland moved the ball methodically down the field before punching in a 1-yard Cassel touchdown to score its final points of the game. The Raiders went for two and failed to convert, setting the stage for Niles' game-winning drive.

The Vikings face Grand Rapids South Christian Saturday afternoon in Division 4 state semifinal

Leaderpub.com will be up-dated with a recap of the game.

MAXWELL HARDEN | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

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Public Notices

Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

COUNTY OF BERRIEN

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON THE ADOPTION OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE COUNTY OF BERRIEN PURSUANT TO AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF ACT 381 OF THE PUBLIC ACTS OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN OF 1996, AS AMENDED

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT a public hearing shall be held before the Berrien County Board of Commissioners on December 5th, 2024 at 10:30am in the County Board Chambers, 701 Main Street, St. Joseph, Michigan. The purpose of the hearing is to consider whether to approve an Amendment to the Brownfield Redevelopment Plan submitted on behalf of Tractor Supply Company and pertaining to property located within Benton Charter Township having the following tax identification number: 11-03-0032-0009-98-6, 11-03-5250-0029-01-2, 11-03-0032-0010-00-0

All information related to the proposed plan is available for public inspection at the offices of the Berrien County Community Development Department, 701 Main Street, St. Joseph, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays. Any aspect of the proposed plan amendment may be discussed at the public hearing and all interested persons will be given an opportunity to be heard.

Niles Daily Star:
Nov. 23, 2024
HEARING

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF NILES
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

A public hearing will be held on December 9, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. local time, at the City of Niles Fire Department and Council Chambers, 1345 E Main Street, Niles, MI, to obtain the views of citizens concerning those activities undertaken with Community Development Block Grant Funds from October 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024.
An electronic version of the Program Year 2023 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) may be viewed on the City's website at www.nilesmi.org under the Community Development Department tab.
PLEASE BE NOTIFIED that you are invited to attend the hearing and to present your opinions or position concerning the subject of this hearing. If you are unable to attend the hearing, you may send a letter stating your opinions or position to the City of Niles (Attn. Community Development), 333 N. 2 nd Street, Niles, MI 49120, or email communitydevelopment@nilesmi.org by December 9, 2024 at 6:0̃0 p.́m. local time.
The City of Niles will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to those individuals with impairments who wish to attend its public meetings upon receiving at least one week's notice. Any such individual requiring such aids or services should contact the City by writing to City of Niles ADA Coordinator, 333 N 2nd Street, Niles, MI, 49120, or calling 269.683.4700 or 269.683.1313 to access the TDD (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf) for individuals with hearing or speech impairment.
November 12 2024
Sanya Vitale
CDBG Coordinator

Niles Daily Star:
Nov. 23, 2024
HEARING

PUBLIC NOTICE

The November 14, 2024, Bertrand Charter Township Board Regular Meeting draft minutes have been posted at the Bertrand Charter Township Hall, 3835 Buffalo Road, Buchanan, MI 49107 and on the township website (bertrandtwpmi.gov). Polly White, Clerk Bertrand Charter Township

Niles Daily Star:
Nov. 23, 2024
MEETING

Legal Notices

LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF BERRIEN
PUBLICATION OF NOTICE AND CREDITOR'S NOTICE
FILE NO. 2024-1003-DE-G

ESTATE OF JOYCE K. HUNT, Deceased (also known as JOYCE KAY TURNOCK).
Date of Birth: August 5, 1939

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including creditors and heirs of the deceased whose address(es) are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:
Be advised that a Petition for Determination of Heirs has been filed with the Court and a hearing on said Petition will be held on **Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 9:55 A.M.**, via Zoom teleconference. Please contact the attorney for the estate for instructions.
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The Decedent, JOYCE K. HUNT (also known as JOYCE KAY TURNOCK), who lived at 802 South Red Bud Trail, Buchanan, Michigan, died September 9, 2024.
Creditors of the Decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Derek K. Turnock, named personal representative, or to the probate court at 811 Port Street, Saint Joseph, Michigan 49085 and the named personal representative within four (4) months after the date of publication of this notice.
November 23, 2024

Derek K. Turnock
94 South 2nd Avenue
Beach Grove, Indiana 46107-1808
(317)213-2227

Robert L. Landgraf, Jr.
Post Office Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120-8310
(269)683-8300

Niles Daily Star: Nov. 23, 2024
EST/HUNT, J.

LEGAL NOTICE

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF BERRIEN
PUBLICATION OF NOTICE AND CREDITOR'S NOTICE
FILE NO. 2024-0990-DE-G

ESTATE OF DENITA LYNNE LONGFELLOW, Deceased.
Date of Birth: February 26, 1961

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including creditors and heirs of the deceased whose address(es) are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:
Be advised that a Petition for Determination of Heirs has been filed with the Court and a hearing on said Petition will be held on **Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 9:55 A.M.**, via Zoom teleconference. Please contact the attorney for the estate for instructions.
NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The Decedent. DENITA LYNNE LONGFELLOW, who lived at 701 Rynearson Street, Buchanan, Michigan 49107, died April 10, 2023.
Creditors of the Decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Roxanne Longfellow, named personal representative, or to the probate court at 811 Port Street, Saint Joseph, Michigan 49085 and the named personal representative within four (4) months after the date of publication of this notice.
November 23, 2024

Roxanne Longfellow
802 Rynearson Street
Buchanan, Michigan 49107
269-450-9554

Robert L. Landgraf, Jr.
Post Office Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120 - 8310
(269) 683-8300

Niles Daily Star: Nov. 23, 2024
EST/LONGFELLOW, D.

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FILE | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Christmas at The Bonine House begins Dec. 1

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

VANDALIA — Area residents looking to celebrate the holidays will be able to take a step back in time next month.

The Underground Railroad Society of Cass County will host its Christmas at The Bonine House event from 1 to 6 p.m. Dec. 1-14. The annual free event allows guests to visit the historic Bonine House, on Penn Road and M-60 in Vandalia, as its halls are decked with Christmas decorations and cheer.

The Bonine House is the Victorian home of James E. and Sarah Bogue Bonine, abolitionists and stationmasters on the Underground Railroad. The Bonines used their home and carriage house to provide shelter for freedom-seeking slaves in the 1800s. For more information, visit www.urscc.org.

SUBMITTED | LEADER PUBLICATIONS

Lake Michigan College to Host Law Enforcement Hiring Fair

COMMUNITY REPORT

BENTON HARBOR — People considering a career in public safety are invited to attend a Law Enforcement Hiring Fair hosted by Lake Michigan College from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 10. The open house-style event will be held in the Hanson Technology Center on LMC's Benton Harbor campus located at 2755 E. Napier Ave.

Attendees can talk with representatives from city, township, and county law enforcement departments throughout Southwest Michigan about career opportunities within those organizations. Agencies expected to attend include:

- Benton Township Police Department
- Berrien Springs Oronoko Township Police Department
- Benton Harbor Department of Public Safety
- Niles Police Department
- St. Joseph Department of Public Safety
- Berrien County Sheriff's Office – Enforcement Division
- Berrien County Sheriff's Office – Jail Division
- Cass County Sheriff's Office
- Allegan County Sheriff's Office
- Berrien County 911 Dispatch
- Berrien County Juvenile Center
- Kalamazoo Probation Enhancement Program (KPEP)
- Michigan Department of Corrections, Berrien Probation and Parole

Information will also be available about the next LMC Police Academy sessions planned for Summer 2025. The session will be held on the College's Benton Harbor Campus beginning in May.

Registration is not required for this free event. An updated resume and professional dress are recommended. Those with questions can contact Brad Byerle, LMC Police Academy director at bbyerle@lakemichigancollege.edu or 269-927-8154.

County Commission talks substance abuse programs, 2025 budget

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

ST. JOSEPH — Berrien County Commissioner Michael Majerek gave good news about youth substance abuse in the county at Thursday's Board of Commissioners meeting. The county has been active in supporting substance abuse programs over the years.

Majerek, who represents the City of Niles on the county board, reported that an area substance abuse organization surveys area high school students every year. Students are asked anonymously about their alcohol, drug and tobacco use.

He said while 22 percent said they drank alcohol in 2012, only 9.7 percent said they did in 2022. The levels for binge drinking also went down, from 12.2 percent to 5.7 percent.

Other substance use categories went down as well. Prescription drug use was 6.1 percent in 2018 and 3.2 percent now. Marijuana use also went down, from 15.7 percent in 2012 to 10.2 percent now. "They've all been steadily coming down," he said.

Tobacco use reported by students had the most dramatic decline, from 14 percent in 2012 to nine-tenths of one percent now. Vaping use also went down, from 24 percent in 2018 to 10 percent now.

Thursday's meeting featured action on grants, grant applications and the 2025 budget. The budget for the fiscal year starting Jan. 1 calls for expenditures of $250 million over all county departments and millage rates of 4.768 mills for general operating, .1 mill for parks, .4495 mill for 9-1-1, .3496 mill for public safety and .2297 mill for senior centers.

County Commissioner Julie Wuerfel was among commissioners who unanimously voted to approve the budget but asked for a different process in coming years. She noted that commissioners had budget meetings with county staff for three hours last Wednesday followed by a 20 minute budget hearing last Thursday before the full county board.

"Then we approve a budget of $250 million a week later," she said. "I think the process should last longer, but I'm not sure exactly what that would look like. I don't think we need to go back to a three day budget hearing, that wasn't productive either."

Commissioners took time to recognize a couple outgoing local officials. Oronoko Township Clerk Suzanne Renton is retiring after 23 years as the township clerk and Galien Township Supervisor Gerald Mast was defeated in the November election.

Mast was lauded for his involvement in the broadband expansion effort over the last few years and in turn thanked county officials for leading the effort to get broadband into the rural parts of the county.

Mast said that work by Midwest Energy & Communications to expand broadband in the county has reached a majority of households in his township. He singled out County Administrator Brian Dissette and County Commissioner and BC Bit Chair Teri Freehling for their willingness to listen to people and support broadband efforts.

"We're happy to have had your involvement from the beginning," County Board Chairman McKinley Elliott said. "Your township residents owe you a debt of gratitude for all you've done … I hope you will entertain some continued involvement at the county level. We always have boards and commissions that need good people."

DEALS ON WHEELS

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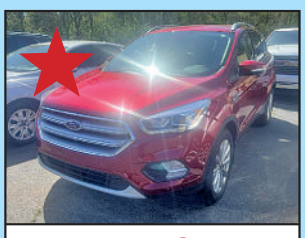

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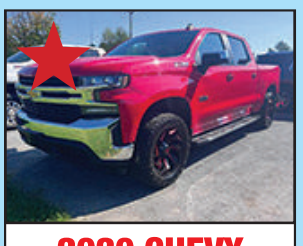

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